



## Colorado Sustainable Main Streets Initiative

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### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **1. What is the Sustainable Main Streets Initiative?**

Limited financial resources at all levels of government create a challenge for many programs and services. Understanding the need to be more efficient and innovative in how the state works with communities in identifying needs and solutions, Governor Bill Ritter has directed state agencies to bring their staff resources and partners to bear in addressing specific projects in pilot communities.

This initiative brings a collaborative, integrated process to leverage technical and existing financial resources to help communities enhance the sustainability of their downtowns. While there is not a dedicated funding source for this initiative, an emphasis will be placed on helping communities better position themselves for existing funds from a variety of sources. The initiative will work to break down silos among state agencies, reduce barriers to state resources, and leverage technical and financial resources more efficiently.

#### **2. What are the principles of sustainability?**

There are seven key principles to creating and supporting sustainability within a community.

- **Increase economic competitiveness**  
Invest in education and training for the global economy, attract and position employment centers near housing and transit, expand business access and promote rural economic development that preserves and enhances community identity
- **Promote equitable, affordable housing**  
Identify, encourage and invest in quality, energy efficient, affordable housing near jobs, shopping, and public and recreation amenities
- **Support existing communities**  
Strategically optimize goal driven infrastructure funding to maximize investment, support long term viability and revitalize communities

- **Provide more transportation choices**  
Improve safe, reliable and affordable transportation choices to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality; create transit-oriented neighborhoods with biking and walking opportunities
- **Conserve, responsibly utilize and protect valuable natural resources**  
Focus investments which plan for and conserve a clean water supply, improve air quality, protect natural resources, and promote local and regional food systems, energy efficiency and renewable energy
- **Value healthy communities and neighborhoods**  
Support unique and historic community characteristics by investing in quality schools, prosperous and sustainable downtowns, and healthy, safe, walkable neighborhoods
- **Enhance integrated planning and investment**  
Align policies to remove barriers, maximize and leverage funding and increase accountability and effectiveness of government programs

### **3. Which communities will participate in the pilot program?**

- Five Points Neighborhood in Denver
- Fowler
- Monte Vista
- Rifle

These communities will serve as pilots to test this collaborative approach. Best practices will be developed and shared with communities statewide. These communities will share their lessons learned with state agencies and with other communities. All communities will benefit from this pilot program.

### **4. How will the state work in the pilot communities?**

The pilot communities will form a team of local leaders from myriad stakeholder groups, including, for example, the municipality, private sector, nonprofits, colleges, school district, hospital, and others. The local team will meet to determine the outcomes the community would like to achieve for their downtown, and select a local champion who will serve as the local lead for the initiative. The local champion is a person in the community who has the trust and respect of a broad group of citizens and who will bring groups together and build support for the effort. This local lead will work with the state agency resource team to develop solutions to locally-identified problems.

### **5. What were the criteria for selecting these communities?**

These communities all have engaged the state on downtown revitalization efforts and have completed or undertaken sustainability planning for their communities. Additionally, they represent a diverse set of circumstances so as to broaden the lessons learned and practices used.

The pilot communities represent different regions of the state and include both urban and rural settings.

**6. How will you measure the success of this Initiative?**

As a result of the state's efforts, each identified community will have achieved one or more of the following outcomes, with significant progress by the end of December 2010:

- Reduce the number of vacant storefronts in our downtown.
- Increase private investment in our downtown redevelopment.
- Achieve more infill and mixed land uses, including affordable housing options in our downtown.
- Increase our community's access to Colorado-grown food projects.
- Enhance the state educational and workforce development services by co-locating in our downtown for convenience in a "one-stop shop."
- Enhance the disaster readiness of our central business district and community through mitigation efforts and planning.
- Improve the pedestrian friendliness of our Main Street and increase transportation choices.
- Improve the energy efficiency of our community and use of renewables in our downtown area.
- Achieve more effective water conservation results for our community.
- Improve the access to faster broadband internet services for business, residences and governmental entities in our community.
- Reduce greenhouse gases and the negative impact they create in our community.
- Increase the preservation of historic structures in our community.
- Increase the volunteer opportunities in our community that assists job seekers to expand their experience and become a more competitive job applicant.
- Increase the number of our students enrolled in dual degree programs for high school completion and college readiness.

**7. Which state agencies are involved?**

This partnership is still building. At this time, the following agencies are actively involved, but more agencies will join the partnership as they establish their roles and determine what they have to offer communities specifically toward the objectives of this initiative.

- Department of Local Affairs – Executive Director co-chair; act as convener and provide staff support for the effort
- Office of Economic Development and International Trade – Executive Director co-chair; small business involvement to grow jobs, retain sales tax dollars in state, rather than losing to internet; heritage tourism
- Lt. Governor’s office – to build on P-20 outreach, children outdoors outreach
- Colorado Department of Transportation – main streets are generally on a state or federal highway
- Governor’s Energy Office – energy efficiency, renewables and weatherization opportunities
- Department of Labor and Employment – training opportunities for small businesses
- Department of Higher Education for the Colorado Historical Society and State Historic Fund
- Department of Natural Resources for potential innovative water conservation strategies
- Department of Public Health and Environment for aging water and wastewater treatment infrastructure opportunities and public health benefits
- Department of Agriculture for rural economic opportunity, especially regarding locally grown food
- Governor’s Climate Advisor for link to Climate Action Plan
- Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to encourage greater access to healthcare